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ABSTRACT

Demonstration projects should bring the continuing presence of the larger community into the slum school. Toward the end of administrative change and innovation, a research and development officer is needed, whose authority can cross-cut existing channels of authority. School should be seen as a social system, as the high school especially is a crucial element in regulating the life chances of inner-city children. Two different teacher models that could be well adapted to the slum school are (1) the teacher-counselor who would be in charge of 10 to 15 students and act both as teacher and counselor, and (2) the teacher-manager. The latter model would act as coordinator between the classroom and the social agencies and family contacts. The teacher would have a staff of teaching aides and volunteers and the assistance of school-community agents. A continuous development curriculum (in which the student is evaluated every six to eight weeks until he is able to pass or repeat in variant form a given set of materials), three hours of individual attention per student each week, mutual support associations for teachers, mobilization of legal resources, public school responsibility for inservice training, cultural enrichment programs, and family participation through community contacts are recommended. [Not available in hard copy due tc marginal legibility of the original document.] (KG;

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How Shall the School For The Model Cities Program Be Organized?

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HOW SHALL THE SCHOOL FOR THE MODEL CITIES PROGRAM BE ORGANIZED?

By Morris Janowitz

I will make the basic assumption that the school should be the coordinating unit for the full range of agencies that are involved in the model cities concept of social planning in the inner city. The school system is the one institution that touches the lives of all members of a local community, directly or indirectly. Even in the most deprived slum area, the school stands as a symbol of unrealized aspiration and there exists broad consensus in the larger society that the effectiveness of inner city schools must be improved.

But the school system has very specific functions and capacities so that to overload it would be to invite disaster. Moreover, in a democratic society, the school system, although it must be subject to political control, cannot become the battle ground of competing local partisan interests. The term coordinating unit, therefore, has been used advisedly. The school's fundamental purpose is to educate; that is, to develop academic, vocational and social skills; but in order to educate, the inner city school requires the effective support of the local agencies of social control. To speak of the school as the basic coordinating unit is not to imply that the school directs the health station, the social agency, the police, etc., in the immediate environment, but rather that the requirements of the school serve as the stimulus for insuring relevant policy and practices by all these agencies. The school is recognized as an agency of social change and it strives for its autonomy, but it is explicitly concerned with the tasks that other agencies must perform for it.

The basic concept of the model cities legislation is that of the demonstration project. However, the notion of the demonstration project in the inner city--be it an educational, housing or social welfare demonstration--is not a new idea. For more than five years there has been intensive discussion of the potentials and limits of the demonstration project, especially of the demonstration school in the inner city. In 1961, pressure for positive action in the inner city produced the delinquency control and youth development legislation which was the first concerted federal intervention in comprehensive community planning. This delinquency control legislation drew on the experiences of the University of Chicago empirical school of sociology which launched the Chicago area project in the 1930's and which was an early expression of concern with community planning and coordination. The model cities legislation of 1966 reaffirms the goals of this approach.

While there exists the fullest intellectual commitment to the concept of the demonstration approach to community planning, there are at the same time very strong reservations based upon pragmatic experience. Demonstration projects have often not been granted the necessary autonomy required to make important innovations. Nor has there been sustained fiscal support so that demonstration projects could have a sustained impact. In the area of education, there has been an absence of adequate efforts to incorporate the findings into the main stream of administrative and professional practice.

There has been no demonstration school or educational program which has produced on a continuing basis the decisive transformations that society expects. There have been some noteworthy failures. Nevertheless, systematic evidence and impressionistic observations underline the fact that generally demonstration schools and projects make some difference in improving the academic achievement and social behavior of youngsters in the slums. In fact,

I would argue that demonstration projects in the inner city which have not been linked to the school system have been less successful and in some cases even had negative effects.

The crucial element is that the demonstration project is a mechanism for bringing the continuing presence of the larger community into the slum school. The demonstration project is a device for insuring that a larger number of children are treated more decently than is the current practice. The impact of the demonstration project is to raise the self-respect of the teacher and in turn, the self-respect of the pupils. The program content and educational technology of the project has its relevance. But is not these specifics which are crucial to the success of the demonstration project. It is instead the fact that the demonstration project becomes a device by which the slum school is linked, even if only temporarily, to the larger society.

There can be no doubt that the organization of the school system into which the demonstration project fits is of crucial importance. The demonstration school must be effectively detached from the larger organizational structure if it is to innovate and have significant consequences. However, this is only half of the issue. If the project becomes sufficiently detached it may succeed for a short period of time. But in the long run, detachment gives way to isolation and the demonstration project becomes another unrelated enclave in the school system. Thus, paradoxically, the demonstration project succeeds only if the larger system is organized to extend sensitive supervision. The larger system must be able to support the demonstration project and have a capacity to learn from its achievements and failures. In short, the demonstration project can only succeed if the very top level of the board of education is appropriately organized.

To this end, there must be a top level administrative officer in

charge of development if these projects are to succeed at the operational level. There are currently widespread efforts to decentralize public school systems and to place under the superintendent an executive office in charge of operations. This is the structure of military and industrial organizations but it is not appropriate for the inner city school system. To employ a chief executive officer or chief of the staff under the superintendent is to assume that the school system has effective policies and procedures, and the task of the chief administrative officer is the surveillance of an ongoing organization. The large inner city school system is faced with basic tasks of administrative change and innovation. Only by establishing a research and development officer, whose authority cross cuts existing lines of authority, can the organization be modified and improved.

For purposes of guiding demonstration schools, two conceptions or analytic approaches to educational innovation can be identified. The first is the strategy of "from the bottom up" or which might be called the interpersonal learning model. The basic assumption is that the earlier the formal institutions of education have access to the child, the less the potential loss of academic achievement. The emphasis is on academic learning and the underlying theory is that of a learning model as exemplified by the work of Jerome Brunner and his particular adaptation of the work of Piaget. Innovational emphasis is on pre-nursery school education and on grade by grade improvement of the curriculum and of teaching techniques. There can be no doubt that this approach is one of the dominant elements of educational innovation in the United States which has led especially to the production of new teaching materials by organizations outside the school system.

It is possible to criticize this approach in terms of the exaggerated expectations that are engendered. It is possible to criticize this approach in terms of scientific criteria, namely, it does not articulate with what

is known about psycho-sexual development of youngsters. Basically, my reservations have to do with issues of institution building and societal context. Fundamentally, if this position is pursued it leads to a concern with mass residential schooling at a very early age level. The Soviet Union with its instruments of social control has not been able to develop residential schooling on a significant mass basis. Its political and administrative feasibility in the United States seems most problematic. This is not to rule out the desireability of many kinds of residential schooling, especially at later age levels. It is, however, necessary to articulate the "bottom up" approach with the existing realities of family, school and community structure. Thus, it is necessary to recognize that most cities of the United States do not even have an effective kindergarten program. Moreover, the basic criticism of the "bottom up" approach is that age by age, and grade by grade strategy does not insure fundamental institutional change. The positive consequences of pre-nursery school education and all of its valuable effects upon parents runs into the powerful organizational constraints as the children move into a conventional educational system. These observations do not deny the importance of appropriate early education.

The second approach is "from the top down"; that is an approach to the school as a social system and a concern with institution building. The experiences of graduates and non-graduates fashion the expectations of the students and the teachers. The essential element is what happens to the life chances of the youngsters who succeed and fail in the slum school. The high school is a crucial element in regulating these life chances of the youngster. The basic problem of educational reform in the inner city is to maximize the opportunities of individualized instruction and at the same time articulate school experiences with adult opportunities in the outer world.

Currently the school system of the inner city is not a civil system but a brutish system of suspicion, hostility and lack of mutual respect. The reconstruction of the inner school system involves the development of a stronger moral climate which is linked to the larger community. Academic achievement is an essential component but not an all encompassing goal. The lack of self esteem of the teachers and pupils because of the disarticulation of the slum with the larger society is basic.

The school must serve as the locus for the public presence of the larger society. The introduction of more resources and the explicit interest of the larger society are necessary to guarantee both academic effectiveness and a breakdown of the social isolation of both teachers and pupils. Basically, the school must operate to insure that each student has a meaningful social position in daily life as long as he does not engage in anti-social behavior.

Under these circumstances, the school system assumes responsibility for guiding the individuals' education and social development until he has found a meaningful stable adult role. Again it needs to be stated that this does not mean that the school system administers or directs all of the essential programs of health, safety and welfare. It does mean that it assumes the responsibility for guiding, communicating, and supervising the life chances of each youngster; it is a locus of thinking about these issues.

Central is the responsibility of the school to insure that the youngster in the slum community has a wide variety of non classroom educational experiences. They include recreational and cultural activities, and exploration of the metropolitan community. They include confrontation with the natural environment outside of the metropolitan setting by such means as the notion of an adventure corps. But the basic ingredient is a series of work experiences for which the youngster is paid. Unfortunately, such work experiences can only be gotten partially through existing economic opportunities. the

construction of specialized work installations in the urban setting is required as well as the creation of work camps beyond the community. (Incidentally, no educational innovation can be used to "buy off" delinquent leaders or to reward deviant behavior.)

My own preference is for the top down approach because it requires fundamental organizational innovation, but clearly the consequences of the bottom down approach are likely to be pervasive in the decade ahead. In any case, these strategies of change need to be articulated with the realities of classroom instruction. At the classroom level, two different tactical approaches emerge. One I would call the teacher-counselor model which draws its inspiration from the psychotherapeutic model. Here the emphasis would be on small classes, perhaps 10, 12 or 15. The responsibility of the teacher is to act both as a teacher and as a counselor for guiding the full life experiences of each one of her pupils. She, herself, is responsible for seeing that all of the social and community services needed to implement her educational program are in fact available for her youngsters. This type of approach has been only rarely used in public education but it is the model of action in residential treatment establishments. There can be no doubt it contains many powerfully attractive ideas, particularly as a vehicle for overcoming the bureaucratic aspects of confused, competing, and disarticulated social agencies. It is perhaps utopian to hope that the kinds of persons required for the task of teacher-counselor would be available in sufficient number to make this tactic an operational reality. More than that, the argument can be made that the relations of teacher-counselor and pupil might be too personalistic and produce too narrow a life space. It would over-concentrate attachments and compound the process of personal maturation.

By contrast, the alternative tactic is the teacher-manager. The teacher accepts the responsibility for managing the classroom and for coordi-

nating the relationship between the classroom and the variety of social agencies, and family contacts, which are essential if she is to achieve her educational goals. Emphasis here is on organizational flexibility. The size of the class may be for part of the day greatly reduced and there would be important components of one-to-one tutorial work. But basically, the teacher is given the management of some 30 to 35 youngsters. The teacher manager has teaching aides and volunteers under her supervision and the assistance of school-community agents. In the home room, the teacher monitors and evaluates the progress and problems of all of the 30 to 35 youngsters. In turn each youngster has a variety of opportunities for interpersonal contact, but the teacher has the priority of responsibility in educational programs.

The teacher-manager is able to make use of a set of standard program elements. Each of these program elements has been employed in school demonstrations but the task is to assemble them into an integrated approach. The guiding assumption is that labor intensive techniques are superior to capital intensive investments in dealing with human problems of education in the inner city. Interpersonal contact and assistance are essential ingredients. The following is a list of such program elements.

First. A basic program would be a "continuous development curriculum" in which the youngster is not required to adhere to formal and rigid standards of performance which have no relevance to his prior background. Instead he is evaluated every six to eight weeks and permitted to pass on or repeat in variant form the material until he achieves some standard level of performance.

Second would be the intensive use of semi-professional and volunteer workers. The goal would be that each youngster should have from one to three hours of individual attention each week in a fashion similar to the family support offered in a middle class family.

Third, teaching in slum schools is a difficult task, especially as the profession is currently organized so that the teacher must operate on a solo basis. The development of collegial relations among teachers through mutual support, conferences, exchange of information and group teaching is essential.

Four, the task of in-service training would be removed from the graduate schools of education and returned to the public school. This system of in-service training would be closely connected with a system of audit and quality control. Such inspection would emphasize "on the job" remedial assistance for teachers.

Fifth is the expansion of non-classroom educational programs, recreational, cultural, work-study arrangements and the like appropriate to the needs and aspirations of each youngster.

Sixth would be the development of community contacts in such a way as to involve families in meaningful support of the school system and to make possible participation of community groups in the life of the educational system.

In addition, legal resources can be mobilized to assist the slum school. A legal specialist could be attached to each district superintendent to help define the rights of the pupils within the educational system. Law is a powerful instrument in our society if it is used not merely as an advisory technique, but more within the context of administrative law (the public equivalent of the "house counsel") to support the needs of youngsters in school.

Just as the teacher-manager serves as a coordinator in the lives of her pupils, equivalent functions need to be replicated at the level of the principal and the district superintendent. The district superintendent is concerned with links to city-wide public agencies and to private groups

which have their base outside of the local community, while the principal has the related task for local voluntary associations and individual parents. While both district superintendent and principal have specialized personnel to assist them in these tasks, the basic representation function is theirs alone.

Thus, it becomes necessary to raise the question of how large a segment of the school system is required for a meaningful experiment. It does appear that at least one high school and the related grade schools which feed into it would be essential. In many cities, this would be the equivalent of an educational district under a district superintendent. It needs to be large enough to make possible meaningful research, including cost beneficial analysis of the demonstration program. This means a modern management system based upon computerized record keeping, staff planning, and program budgeting. Such an administrative approach would also produce data required for the evaluation of the demonstration. The whole notion of modern managerial techniques and computerized record keeping are only beginning to develop in education. Thus far these procedures are seen mainly as devices for record keeping rather than tools for allocating resources and planning operations. Without such transformation in the perspectives of administrative management, it will not be possible to develop the labor intensive programs required at the classroom level.

One way in which to summarize the desired goals in the transformation of the school system and the individual school under the model cities act is to draw the analogy with the mental institution. In the past 25 years we have seen a tremendous change in the mental institutions in our country. They have moved from closed institutions, isolated, removed from the society with antagonistic relationships between patients and staff. They have moved

from closed institutions to open institutions in which the outer community including the families of the patients, is in interaction with the staff to support the goals of rehabilitation. We are now at the threshold of a similar transformation of the school system of the inner city from a closed to an open institution.